

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are pending. In the present amendment, Claims 1 and 4-14 are currently amended. It is respectfully submitted that support for the present amendment is self-evident from the original specification including the original claims. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 5-14 were objected to; and Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Kenji et al. (Japanese Patent Publication No. 06-218875, hereinafter “Kenji”) in view of Ito et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,329,799, hereinafter “Ito”).

Initially, it is noted that Applicant filed an Information Disclosure Statement including a Form PTO-1449 on August 16, 2006. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the references cited in the Form PTO-1449 be considered, and an initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 be provided with the next Office communication.

In response to the objection to Claims 5-14, it is noted that the claims are amended to remove the multiple dependencies therein. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to Claims 5-14 be withdrawn and that Claims 5-14 be treated on the merits.

In response to the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this rejection and traverses this rejection, as discussed below.

Amended Claim 1 recites:

A method for fabricating a composite laminate part, comprising:

coating at least one side of a steel sheet, of which a thickness E_a is less than 0.65 mm with one or more adhesive polymer films of which a total thickness E_p is equal to or

greater than 0.1 mm, to form a composite laminate steel sheet having a total thickness E, according to which $E = E_a + E_p$,

optionally, cutting said sheet to form a blank, and then

forming the composite laminate sheet or sheet blank by drawing to obtain said composite part, the drawing being carried out in a drawing tool comprising a punch, a die, and a blank holder, by *adjusting the value of the material passage Pm between the punch and the die, so that:*

$$E - 0.80 \times E_p \leq Pm \leq E.$$

As explained in the original specification, for example, at page 9, line 32 to page 11, line 11, by adjusting the value of the material passage Pm between the punch and the die so that $E - 0.80 \times E_p \leq Pm \leq E$, the composite part maintains a constant and uniform pressure and contact between the punch, the sheet or blank, and the die. Thus, the composite laminate part is not folded or deformed.

The outstanding Office Action, in section 4 on page 2 concedes that Kenji “does not disclose either using a blank holder in the drawing pool or a material passage that follows the formula $E - 0.80 \times E_p \leq Pm \leq E$.” Instead, the Office Action relies on Ito to cure the deficiencies of Kenji.

Ito describes a process for press-forming a tubular container-like article, such as a can, including a first step wherein a steel blank is drawn into an intermediate work-piece having a tubular portion and a bottom portion which closes one of the opposite axial ends of the tubular portion, and a second step in which the tubular portion of the intermediate work-piece is ironed in an axial direction, and which comprises a forward ironing followed by a backward ironing.¹ Additionally, Ito describes first, second and third drawing steps are performed with different die clearance values (first drawing step $1.8t_o$, second drawing step $0.91t_o$, third drawing step $0.94t_o$, fourth drawing step $1.04t_o$).² The die clearance described in Ito is a distance between the outer surface of a drawing punch and an inner surface of a die

¹ See Ito, column 1, lines 9-22.

² See Ito, at columns 13 and 14, and in Table 2.

hole, that is, a difference in radius between the diameters of the punch and the die hole and the value (t_0) represents the thickness of the stainless steel before blanking (drawing).

However, it is respectfully submitted that Ito does not disclose or suggest “adjusting the value of the material passage P_m between the punch and the die, so that: $E - 0.80 \times E_p \leq P_m \leq E$,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Instead, as discussed above, Ito describes that the drawing has to be performed with a minimum clearance between the punch and the die. Thus, Ito does not disclose or suggest that there is *no clearance* between the punch and the die, as would be required by the adjusting the value of the material passage according to the formula recited in Claim 1.

Additionally, the Office Action on page 3, equates the ironing punch 24 described in Ito to a blank holder. However, it is noted that the ironing process described in Ito has nothing to do with a drawing process as the ironing consists in stretching the wall of the intermediate work-piece. Thus, the aim of the process described in Ito is to avoid the cracks of the wall, and to provide uniformity in the wall thickness during the ironing step, and not during the drawing.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the ironing step described in Ito with the drawing step. Additionally, even assuming the combination to be proper, it is respectfully submitted that Kenji and Ito do not disclose or suggest every feature recited in amended Claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection of Claim 1, and all claims dependent thereon, as unpatentable over Kenji in view of Ito be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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